



About the CTA

COAST TRANSIT AUTHORITY

A Brief History Of CTA

In the early 1900's, Joseph T. Jones, a local entrepreneur, realized that the City of Gulfport, then in it's infancy, would require some kind of public transportation system to ensure growth of the City. In 1906, the Gulfport and Mississippi Coast Traction Company began operating trolleys in the Gulfport area. In 1925, Mississippi Power Company changed the vision to a more modern reality. The trolleys were abandoned for a more efficient and flexible way to travel: the bus. Bus transportation prospered. The public traveled under the Mississippi City Line until 1954, and Municipal Transit Lines, Inc., until 1969. In August of 1969, the worst of all natural disasters, Hurricane Camille hit the Coast.

In 1970, the Mississippi Legislature created, by Act, the Mississippi Coast Transportation Authority (MCTA). This was a significant event because, prior to that time, public transportation had been privately owned. But, because these companies found it impossible to operate on a profitable basis, public transportation systems were failing nationwide. For this reason, many governing bodies determined that public transportation should operate as a public service and be financed by passengers fares and federal and local funding. It was to be viewed as a public service in the same way that streets, sanitation, fire and police protection are considered public services, with one major difference. Public transportation does generate some revenue.

Before the Municipal Transit Lines, Inc., ceased operation, the Mississippi Coast Transportation Authority was formed, but it did not start transit operations until August 16, 1974. The return of bus service marked the end of a 3-year, 4-month period during which the coastal communities suffered with no transportation system. The system operated under the MCTA name until 1985, when it was changed to Coast Area Transit. Along with the new name came new more efficient vehicles, with higher frequency and revised schedules. In keeping with the new and existing changes occurring on the Coast and for recognition purposes as the public transit system, the name was again changed in 1992 to Coast Transit Authority. The logo was also changed to the one that is currently in use.

In 1990 four Chance Coach replica trolley buses were purchased for operation on highway 90 in Biloxi and Gulfport. A contest was held to name the bus route. The name Beachcomber Line was the winning entry. The highway 90 Route is still known today as the Beachcomber Route. The Trolleys proved to be so popular that six more ADA equipped Trolleys were purchased between 1991 and 1993. The trolley buses have become the recognized trademark of

CTA. In 2003, two state of the art hybrid electric Ebus Trolley buses were purchased to begin replacing the aging Chance Coach buses. They began operating on Casino Row in Biloxi in September. This was CTA's first purchase of environmentally friendly alternative fueled vehicles. In 2004 CTA purchased and began operating two new Hybrid Electric typical transit type buses.

Who is CTA?

CTA is a non-profit provider of public transportation for the three coastal counties of Mississippi. It is an independently managed public utility that is governed by a Board of Commissioners. It is the designated recipient of State and Federal funding for urban transportation on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

The CTA Mission

To provide safe, dependable, clean, comfortable, convenient and affordable public transportation services to the Mississippi Gulf Coast in a cost efficient manner.

Types of Transportation Services Provided

Fixed Route Service: Consists of transportation service provided on a "hub and spoke" routing system that radiates out from transfer facilities. It is a system of designated routes, with designated stops and a fixed schedule. Various types of facilities are provided for passenger comfort and convenience. Passenger waiting facilities range from a simple bench with a bus stop sign to covered shelters to purpose built waiting and transfer facilities with public restrooms, phones and vending machines.

ADA/Paratransit Service: A curb-to-curb transportation service provided for persons with disabilities that are unable to access or use the Fixed Route Service. This service is provided for persons that are within a $\frac{3}{4}$ mile corridor of a Fixed Route. Access is provided on an appointment basis.

Special Services: These contracted services include programs that provide transportation for senior citizens to attend Senior Citizen Centers, grocery shopping, medical appointments and field trips, transportation for area nursing homes and transportation for persons with disabilities to attend work centers and field trips.

Service Area

The CTA service area consists of the three coastal counties of Mississippi and all the incorporated cities in those counties.

CTA currently provides Fixed Route and ADA/Paratransit Service in, Biloxi, Gautier, Gulfport, Ocean Springs, and Pascagoula. Special Route Services are currently provided in Harrison and Hancock counties.

Funding

Funding for CTA's operations and capital projects are currently provided by self-generated revenue, the Federal Transit Administration, Harrison County, the City of Biloxi, the City of Gulfport, the City of Ocean Springs and the State of Mississippi.

Self-generated funds consist of passenger fares, advertising revenue, charter

revenue, contract revenue, vending revenue and sale of surplus equipment. Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding is provided in the form of operating (50/50) and capital (80/20) grants. To access these grants, either 50% or 20% local matching funds are required to be available. The State of Mississippi, Harrison County, the City of Biloxi, the City of Gulfport and the City of Ocean Springs provide funding in the form of operating subsidies.

Management

CTA is governed by a Board of Commissioners. The Board of Commissioners is responsible for establishing policy for the management staff. CTA's Board of Commissioners currently consists of six members. Two members each represent the City of Biloxi, the City of Gulfport and Harrison County.

The day-to-day operation of the authority is under the leadership of an Executive Director. The management staff consists of three Department Directors and two supervisors.

THE FUTURE OF CTA

The general goals and objectives for the immediate future are to increase ridership, decrease operating expenses, increase self-generated revenue, establish a dedicated source of funding and establish employer sponsored employee commute programs.

Implement a new Marketing Plan that will increase ridership, public awareness and local and state financial support.

Rather than waiting for traffic congestion to choke the growth of the coast, CTA will continue to work with the cities, counties, planning agencies and local business organizations to complete implementation of Phase I of CTA's Park & Ride programs. CTA is currently in the construction phase of an Intermodal Transportation facility for Biloxi that is scheduled for completion in February 2006.

Establish the implementation schedule for Phase II of the Harrison County Multimodal Project, which consists of the construction of interceptor surface park-and-ride lots along the I-10 corridor at the major north/south connectors, and development of an enhanced express service connecting these lots to the entire transit system network via the transfer hubs in Biloxi and Gulfport.

Continue to purchase Alternative fuel vehicles, which will help to reduce the amount of vehicle emissions generated by CTA buses and enable CTA to be an effective partner in helping to meet regional pollution reduction objectives.

Upgrade general passenger facilities along all CTA routes by adding benches and covered shelters in needed areas.